

Bluestreak

poems by

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Bluestreak

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2 pm

time with you
time with you
you with questions,
i without answers-
time with you
when your eyes are soft,
those seldom occasions,
indications
measures of blood,
flux of meeting
marrow in bone white,
color of face before sleep,
color of absence
of time with you
when i need.

9/21/79

CHILDHOOD RETENTION

Shall I ask them to place the injuries in my pyre?
I ignite so easily now, consume
ooze enough to smooth
the scars down your back
you thought could be hidden-
but when you dressed in the bathroom I looked.

if it was privacy you wanted you should have told me,
I would have understood. I knocked,
I heard paper rustle
and the way you cleared your throat.
I hated walking in, I hated leaving-
I didn't know what I wanted, perhaps a glass of water.

in the city at aunt dianas,
in the mirror, of the medicine cabinet
I saw her nude, her falling ass,
I saw she was the same with clothes on-
she still talked to me,
even on the toilet.

someone always trying to close the door
leaving it ajar, a question, a fear-
I hid my enticement,
built fires under the pines-
a shack to crawl in
where I could hang any picture I wanted.

but inside, when night was so quiet,
your creek up the stairs
scattered me down the long hall
(mad rush and leap towards bed)
into your steel arms which caught
the most paralyzed child to confession.

iron grips, I tell you you haven't lost,
although I get caught no longer.
but blood doesn't conquer, it thins.
and when we speak you only hear
some distant language, some misheard question.

now you want to look in my bathroom.

side by side a soft quiet
wind catching on the palate
moments before the snore

before the next adjustment
neck and face over
then under the rounding shoulder

it was the morning
after the morning

gummed stars kept falling
blue and gold in my sheets

I was dreaming of war
reaching across her

putting back twice the stars and my arm

years gyred/ eyes sealed shut
lips prowling/ cool beads
fingers tracing my brow

a maze/ amazed
our only contact side by side
a soft quiet reaching across her

putting back twice
the stars/ the years falling
before the next adjustment

the ringing telephone
cheating the alarm clock
pulled out and waiting

for that quick slide back in
catching on hip and thigh

a fleshy warmth
a twitch/ a sigh

her arm reaching across

HOME COMING

it's hard, the air between us,
the calling and not returning.

it's hard, knowing I was ready
at a seconds notice
with gifts and hugs,
only to find, days later,
that warmth dissipate.
(your presence still unwrapped)

it was never easy to love you,
to speak words over and over.
we walked
flexing our fists in our white sleeves.
all knew,
all could see how are heads
turned so toward each other.

blood, color of your eyes worn
with tears, color of my rage

forsaken. and still,
the wreckage of those years
is strewn and floating
somewhere off at sea.
it could be years
before our stories separate,
wash up on the shore.

gulls and crows will pick at the shiny objects,
gold hearts and roses vanished in flight.

for t.c.

the little girl in bed
banging, rising,
on the wall a color:
blue-
the ma ma still asleep

10/79

YOUR TURN

she met him the same time I met you.
I remember the light on the Bronx river,
the flesh in our shiny dispositions-
drinking coffee, eating muffins,
watching the dogs wander out of sight.

he keeps her in his room now;
you keep me in your phone book.
you dial/
your finger deteriorates.

sputum collects on your lips,
the taste just now soiling the tongue.
your lack of faith/ my vacant stare,
these droplets of scum.

such careless species,
we vertebrata
without the spine to say it's over.

Ingrid Sell

I ran my hands through clattering print, trying to find
the perfect poem to crack the glassy stillness left by my
stuttering

finding sharp-edged leaden spheres
and feathery tinsel balls
that rolled around, rattling in some
ring-modulation of my thoughts

Instead, I roll an orange marble at you
Orange, the color of insanity
I'm not quite sure what
insanity I mean:

that of a five-year-old child trying
a cursive scrawl before her printed
letters have stopped shaking

or
that of a dying eighty-year-old woman
scribbling farewells
with arthritic hands

Creativity is always the issue when you're in a slump:

I pluck the gems of someone else's brilliance
and grind them into pebbles,
the quiet fluid sheen
now grey sand trickling between my fingers.

MIDNITE POEM

3 AM screeching as in coffeed hazy daylight
My hand scribbling at 100 mph
mind frozen
racing on a treadmill of
2 inches on this page
screaming into the cool stillness, silence
 sitting heavily on the other side
 of brittle glass trapping my
 incandescent nightmare
grating, empty pencil lines
screech, drip
clarified oil - a phrase, a word
falling by the wayside
 like coke cans and cigarette butts
 rattling along the freeway

POSTSCRIPT

Lovers
are glittering packages wrapped in electrical wire.
They have to be unwrapped
very carefully.

The trick is to do it before the current is turned on.

AWAKENING

(Note: This is a performance poem, in which the reader interacts with a tape of times given on the telephone. Cues for the reader are indicated by an asterisk)

...5:59 and 50 seconds

At the tone the time will be *6:00 exactly

At the tone the time will be...

*The luminous arm of the clock
Slides past twelve;
Dawn soaks a black blotter sky.
Heartbeating, it stalks.

...6:59 and 50 seconds

At the tone the time will be *7:00 exactly

At the tone the time will be...

*Number-face leers alive as chalky light
Smooths out the shadows of green arms
Glowing past twelve again.

... and 10 seconds

At the tone, the time will be 9:15 and 20 seconds*

At the tone...

*I am pressed against the walls of this
Centrifugal clock, each tick an explosion;
How far can an eardrum stretch
Before it snaps?

...11:58 and 50 seconds

At the tone, the time will be 11:59 and 20 seconds

At the tone, the time will be 11:59 and 40* seconds

At the tone the time will be 11:59 and 50 seconds

At the tone the time will be...

*Inside my skull, a rubber-band stretches
and pops
How far can it pull before it snaps?

WINTER

I can dream of no morning after this,
night when the granite sky
slips easily onto the worn shoulders
of a flower that, while wilting,
was preserved in ice

only the slow cooling
of the pink blanket
bathwater
where I melted the slicing of a winter's chill

and a shriek
trapped in a microwave
snaking it's way
through the universe
and beyond

ACTS OF FAITH

Two paper dolls, we walked to the market,
our knocked-kneed toothpicks sticking out
of belled winter coats. The cold snuck underneath
and pinched us between the legs. We linked elbows
against the raw.

In your world there were no lights
on Saturdays - no scissors, no cars, just sleep
and coffee cake and rooms of black coated men
at prayer. The purity attracted me.
Now you learn to bake, call my mother
for recipes to fatten your husband, preserve
the rituals so the race lives on.
I create new rituals in preparation
for the inevitable genocide.
What reserve will I have to summon?
During war, a strong woman
meters rations and is forced
to leave a stocked cupboard to faith.

Everything as we know it
will be changed. Cubed houses that nest
into hills, the taut stretch
of a lawn. Shrubs and kiddie swings rooting
in the backyard: gutted, shifted, completely rearranged.

I think they think we have been spared.
Do you think we have been spared?
I heard you have fattened a baby together.

I continue to think that lighting candles
will save me.

Had you lived you would have been
a rich man, but at twenty-nine, restless, unmarried
to your girlfriend of nine years,
mourning your friend dead in the war,
you drove a car off the road.
On yellowed pads buried in the closet
I find your precise sketches.

Your sister, her ear freshly sewn
to the side of her head, her collarbone braced
for the occasion, would not let them
open the coffin. And on my wall
the pencil-veined hands of fishermen
still haul their unfinished nets.

HALLOWEEN

Breakfast

I went into a white room to carve some pumpkins. I scraped them out one by one. My fingers were bleeding but there were plenty of pillows for bandages. I set the pumpkins on soft blankets and lay down.

Lunch

I went into a black room to light the pumpkins. Unfamiliar men stood against the walls; bread crusts and slime coated the floor. The men refused to look at me - I grabbed the first man by the hair and tossed his head into a pail. The other men moaned quietly as I picked their heads off like apples. I kicked their bodies into the center of the room and went off to the kitchen to cook dinner.

Dinner

There were no forks. I crushed the pulp with my fingers and added some mouthwater. It was absolutely still outside - no guests yet. When they came in I rushed them into the dining room. During the meal, I had to hang off the roof by my ankles, sucking dinner through a ten-foot straw.

I found that I could actually sleep in this position quite calmly, watching the red orange ground sway below me.

To do lottery poems: 1. compile a word-bowl using verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Include as many activities, items, active verbs, etc. as you can. Since parts of speech may be changed, use words in their basic form. 2. After words are gathered each player throws the dice three times. The number of each throw determines the number of words to be randomly selected from the bowl. 3. Each player then composes a poem using only the words selected, except for pronouns, conjunctions, articles, and prepositions, which can be added as needed.

Shari Kadison

Emanate her middle round,
brothers' birth key,
throat expansion -
the voice.

emanate, walk,
least frost fragments
a middle round
as thread frazzles
an incomprehensible flag

on the death ship
keep mouth narrow:

repeat.

Ingrid Sell

Speak,
fast pulsed-hoofed city

gather, unwind, reveal
the rope imposing
a limit
predicting your funeral day

dissect the coffee series of fluorescent
morsels
sloping upward

your satellite guards,
impedes your disappearance
into vacant ash

coffee pulse
speaking fast

a series of fluorescent hoofs revealed,
morsels unwinding and dissecting
the upward slope of the city

the guarding satellite is vacant,
impeding prediction

You disappear into ash: your funeral day

Pamela Gordon

1. surpass luck.
survive chronic abandon:
speech looses noise
in the most erect judge.

the frantic peace of a sudden passport.
(that month in the zoo I frequented scratches
of steel proportion)

change
to selective penetration

2. The loose survival of chronic change.
Frequently steel scratches my most peaceful abandon.
Luck's frantic proportions surpass speech
but the judge of my noisy zoo
erects sudden penetration.
I select a month's passport.

Anne K. Briggs

THE YEAR OF THE DIGIT

The summer sing ends,
surviving the disgust, the disease:
south city street where the pitch is clear,

In the year of the digit
the tentacle hand
operates
only an organic toy.

Newspaper Poems

and Mona Lisa pink smile." As were not enough, the heroine was "tremendously clever" as well as irresistible to men.

Was Lucy Antonia? Mrs. Billington wriggled and then said: "Not at all true, the two are very well known, the style's the same." The authoress squelched any talk of sisterly rivalry by citing 10 years' difference in age. "I didn't know each other at all when I was in her 20's. What I saw when I was 10 was a wonderful, stunning creature with jangly earrings, going out to do my homework. Now 10 years later, nothing."

Lady Antonia preceded her younger sister to New York only two months ago, to promote her latest biography on Charles II. In close-up both are lovely, but Lady Antonia projects a lush ripeness while her sister has a delicate, fine-boned beauty.

She is uncomfortable with "Lady Rachel" and prefers to bear, socially and professionally, her husband's surname. "But you know how the English are," she sighed, "status-crazy. 'Lady Rachel' has an instant response mechanism — 'she shops at Harrods, she has a large house in the country.' I find any form of label annoying."

She hates Harrods but the Billingtons do have a house in the country, the oldest inhabited house in Dorset. Their London residence is in Holland Park, where Mrs. Billington spends the hours from 9:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. writing by hand in bed. When the weather is good, she puts on a bikini and goes to the garden to create. Mrs. Billington said her husband is proud of and very interested in her career. She is equally involved in his.

After reciting these pluses in her life, Mrs. Billington's face fell. "I have only one real problem," she said. "Help at home. It's driving me mad. Wouldn't it be wonderful if my next book contract read: 'To Rachel Billington for six months: a housekeeper.' It would mean more to me than any amount of dollars."



FIND THE HIDDEN POEM

clerk and former editor of *Punch*, who had played Cupid. The reception was held in the House of Lords, where the bride's father, the Earl of Longford, was then leader, with Christmas trees and plum pudding as part of the festivities.

"The last image of my mother, as Kevin and I rolled away for our honeymoon," Rachel Billington said the other day, "was of her stuffing the car with books and wrapping it up. She was terrified it would be stolen."

The newlyweds made their way to Scotland and the house of Mrs. Billington's eldest sister, Lady Antonia Fraser, a celebrated beauty and an author, as are so many of the "literary Longfords." There the Billingtons were snowbound. As Mrs. Billington tells it, her husband literally commanded her to write, which she had never done for publication, and shut her up in the study, saying: "Right! Do it then!" With the example of her mother, father, a brother, two sisters and other family members all scribbling away to produce well received books, Mrs. Billington followed suit.

"I was deeply in love," she said. "I didn't question Kevin." And besides, it seemed to come naturally to her. The result was "All Things Nice," of which she said, "I tossed it off." She feels she would never have gotten started if her

work by far but also to the most terrifying through and all she said. At the writing stint, she said what she de-

nal tunnel," she said, "Caspar, was the eldest, Naomi and Chloe in being — I've hardly said of her child-

Line at she may come a generation, with seven Mrs. Billington views this ambiguous as far down in the bed to do anything I didn't have to most of my childhood. When she was 19, bored, she swore and then again — and

gton wrote a book of buzzing and believing. A portrait of her sister. Called "Beautiful," it was a delight about Lucy, "beautiful" "white bosom"

PROTECT YOUR ROSES

If there's one garden plant you can't neglect
it is
the rose

do not let go unat-
tended

Even the seemingly dainty miniatures
(do not let them decieve you)

generate too much heat, like the sin-
gle pink Betty will expose: strip
starting at the bottom and
working upwards
spirally. After that,

one sees
few tree roses, undoubtedly
because of the labor required to
tend

The old time way to handle them-and this
applies to all kinds of rose-
is to beat
with a brick

After tying
With soft twine, a technique
practiced with the non-hardy edible fig

There are other aids. One is to use collars.

Or improvise and use any-
thing that will prevent
a rose combat

Leave the rest to Old Man Winter
who has his own age-old, unalterable
ways of causing Peace

Pamela Gordon

Ended the contest decried
the narrowness under sunny skies.
A perfect cross
fed
and played--
tuned for it's crucial hat trick.

